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AUTHOR	Ross, Marilyn J.
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ABSTRACT

Through naturalistic inquiry, the study reported in this book sought to determine the inner qualities that compel some black males to persist and overcome adversity, while others of their socioeconomic class quit and fail. The research was designed to identify the factors that led to the successful achievement of African American male students at a 118-year-old historically black college. The study documents the traits of 17 students who were members of an honorary organization called "The President's Men." Seventeen black male students who were born outside the United States were also interviewed for the perspectives their experiences could provide. The experiences of both groups of young men indicate that nurturing is at the center of the young black male's ability to survive and to overcome obstacles, many of which are part of the black male's daily environment. When a young black male is nurtured by a significant person, it creates the capacity to persist. The bonding of the adolescent to a person who provides strong guidance and is a positive role model gives the young man a sense of responsibility. Students in this study were introspective. They took charge of their own lives, made constructive choices, and focused on goal-oriented behavior. A supportive environment, family, church, or school, was also necessary. Overall, the study shows that someone has to care for the student. One appendix contains the study's biographical profile form, and the other contains selected interview transcripts. (Contains 3 figures and 70 references.) (SLD)

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